

FACULTY OF MUSIC UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**THE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY  
CHORUS**

Doreen Rao, conductor

&

**THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC  
ENSEMBLE**

Pierre Hétu & Gary Kulesha, conductors



Saturday, March 21, 1992

8:00 pm

MacMillan Theatre



## PROGRAMME

Quartino  
Contemporary Music Ensemble  
Henryk Gorecki  
*Rachel Klaassen, flute; Jaye Marsh, flute*  
*Heidi Postl, oboe; Karen Graves, violin*

With how sad steps  
from "Love Songs"  
Owen Underhill  
Text: Sir Philip Sidney

An Island In The Moon  
Contemporary Vocal Ensemble  
David Bedford  
*Shira Gilbert, soprano; Hilary Knox, soprano*  
*Mark McCallen, baritone; David De Jong, baritone*

Cosmopolitan Suite  
Chan Ka Nin  
*Stephen Clarke, piano*  
*Jon Saulnier & Craig Hunter, percussion*  
Gary Kulesha, conductor

The Unanswered Question  
Charles Ives  
Pierre Hétu, conductor

◆ ◆ INTERMISSION ◆ ◆

Songs of the Lights  
Imant Raminsh

Shaman Songs  
Gary Kulesha

University Symphony Chorus  
Doreen Rao, conductor

*Jeremy Bell, first violin*  
*Karen Graves, second violin*  
*Samuel Jeung, viola*  
*Margaret Tobola, cello*  
*Hsiao-Ling Tsai, clarinet*

# UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

Doreen Rao, conductor

## Songs of the Lights

Imant Raminsh  
(b. 1943)

### Firefly Song (Ojibway)

Flitting insects, white-fire insects, wand'ring beasts!  
Small-fire beasts!  
Wand'ring beasts!

Weave little stars about my bed.  
Weave little stars into my sleep.

Come, little dancing white-fire bug.  
Come, little flitting white-fire beast.

Light me with your white flame magic,  
Light me with your little star torch.

Oksana Rodak, student conductor

### White Feathers (Papago Indian)

Downy white feathers are moving, are moving  
beneath the sunset.

Downy white feathers are moving, are moving  
along the edge of the world.

Janet Breneman, student conductor

### My Heart's Friend (Shoshone)

Fair is the white star of twilight,  
And the sky clearer at day's end.  
But she is fairer, she is dearer,  
She, my heart's friend.

Fair is the white star of twilight,  
And the moon roving to the sky's end.  
But she is fairer, better worth loving,  
She, my heart's friend.

George Brough, piano



I Orpingalik Speaks of Singing

How many songs I have I cannot tell you. I cannot keep  
count of them anymore than I can keep count of the breath  
I take. There are so many times in life when joy or  
sorrow are felt in such a way that the need to sing comes  
with them. And I must sing. And so I know only that I have  
many songs. All my being is song, and I sing as I draw  
breath.

II Invocation -

Spirit of the air,  
Come down,  
Come down!  
Your shaman calls!

I rise,  
I rise among spirits,  
I rise with the phantoms of the dead!

All around me are bones,  
bleached by Great Sila,  
bleached by the sun and air

But the spirit and the day  
flow through my limbs  
and do not turn them to bones.

Child, great child,  
Child-master of air,  
Come down,  
Great infant spirit!

III Incantation

My great companion, my great guardian spirit  
My great companion, my great guardian spirit.  
Our fine incantation, our fine cries.  
My companion, the one who cries out within  
me ...

IV Uvavnuk is Struck by a Meteor and  
Becomes a Shaman

V Uvavnuk's Song / The Great Sea

The great sea  
I am adrift on the great sea,  
It moves me as the weed in a great river,  
Earth and the great weather  
Move me,  
They have carried me away  
And move my inward parts with joy!

VI Ancient Song

Let me go and watch it vanishing.

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### Songs of the Lights

Imant Raminsh

Imant Raminsh was born in 1943 in Latvia, and came to Canada in 1948. After completing his ARCT diploma in violin at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto (1962) and a Bachelor of Music at the University of Toronto (1966), including studies in composition with Talivaldis Kenins and choral techniques with Charles Peaker and Elmer Iseler, he spent two years in post-graduate work at the Akademie Mozarteum, Salzburg, studying composition, fugue, violin, and conducting.

Raminsh's works have won acclaim through performances by groups like the Elmer Iseler Singers, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus and the Stockholm Chamber Choir, and he has received recent commissions from the Vancouver Chamber Choir, Vancouver Bach Choir, the Da Camera Singers of Edmonton, the British Columbia Choral Federation and the CBC. His principal publishers are Gordon V. Thompson and Boosey and Hawkes (New York).

Raminsh has maintained a lifelong interest in vocal and choral music, and most of his compositions display a strongly melodic emphasis, perhaps reflecting his Latvian song-oriented cultural heritage.

*Songs of the Lights* is based on the theme of the natural lights of the world and the universe, as seen through the eyes, and as interpreted in the mythology and poetry of the native American peoples. Subjects range from the primordial creation of light, through the first illuminations of the sun, moon, and stars. There are appearances of more modest lights such as the rainbow and fireflies, to the extinguishing of light in the last wisps of sunset. This set of songs is dedicated by the composer to Doreen Rao and the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus.

*Firefly Song* (translated by H.H. Schoolcraft) attempts to capture the essence of the winking and ever-transforming miniature starscape of the Ojibway text. Points of instrumental and vocal colour (in the form of trills, triadic sonorities, tone clusters, closely overlapping imitative entries) and frequently changing moods are intended to echo the dance of the "flitting, small-fire beasts".

The first section invoking the firefly is characterized by bursts of nervous energy. The second section ("weave little stars about my bed") is more melodic and lyrical. Section three begins with a declamatory statement ("come, little dancing white-fire bug") and is dominated by a cascading minor third figure ("light me with your white flame magic") which subsides, prior to the recapitulation of sections one and two. The piece ends with a coda on the text "weave stars into my sleep", which rises from *ppp* to *mf* and subsides again to conclude at *pp* level.

*White Feathers* is set to a translation from the Papago by Frances Densmore (1867-1957), the foremost American authority on the songs and music of American Indian tribes. The text likely describes or suggests the wisps of clouds on the western horizon illuminated by the last rays of the setting sun. But one might possibly visualize northern lights (though the aurora is probably a rare occurrence as far south as the Papago homelands).



The textual imagery is one of subtlety, changing shades and colours. I have tried to capture this in delicate descending curtains of sound (scale passages in the piano part) against which the simple melodic material provides contrast and stability. The last section begins with a more vigorous rising line and culminates in the only *forte* of the piece after which the opening returns to end the piece with a feeling of tranquillity.

*My Heart's Friend* is set to an interpretation of a Shoshone love song by the great American novelist, Mary Austin (1868-1934), best known for her works about the Indian tribes of the southwest. The melody in Voice I is a simple strophic one keeping with the clearly defined two verses of text. It begins with a restrained first section, ("fair is the white star of twilight") which is followed by a rhapsodic rising line ("but she is fairer...") and subsides again on "she, my heart's friend". The melody in Voice II, designated as optional, is largely contained within the accompaniment, but is strongly recommended in performance for the measure of intensification it adds to the more exultant sections of the piece.

*Imant Raminsh*

## Shaman Songs

Gary Kulesha

Gary Kulesha's *Shaman Songs* were commissioned by the CBC for the Festival of the Sound and first performed by the Elora Festival Choir in 1990. The Inuit poems set by Mr. Kulesha celebrate the eloquent sound and spirit of Inuktitut, a language that according to Northrop Frye may soon disappear. While the poems are set in English, the Chorus has made an effort to create the sounds and articulations associated with Inuktitut, a condensed language that may sound monotonous to some ears, but provides a powerful source of expression for a poet, a shaman, or spirit-maker. As explained by Orpingalik, a leader of the Netsilik, the People of the Seal, "songs are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices."

As recorded by the Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen in 1921, Orpingalik was a skilled hunter, an expert archer and an experienced kayakman. He was held in high esteem as an outstanding poet and powerful shaman. "He was always singing when he had nothing else to do, and he called his songs 'comrades in solitude' or he would say that his songs were his breath". Orpingalik could draw up a song to meet every need. Orpingalik and his fellow shaman Uvavnuuk have given Canada many songs. Our songs tonight celebrate these great poets, their people and their lands farthest north -- Ajajai aja.

*Doreen Rao*





## TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

**GARY KULESHA** is active as a pianist, conductor and principally as a composer. In 1986 he was named composer of the year by the Performing Rights Organization of Canada; he is the youngest composer ever to be so named. Since 1988 he has been Composer-in-Residence with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. In 1990, his work *The Third Chamber Concerto* was nominated for a Juno Award as Best Classical Composition released on disc in 1988-89.

Prior to her appointment as Director of Choral Programs at the University of Toronto, **DOREEN RAO** held the dual position of assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and music director and conductor of the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus. During her long association with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus under Sir Georg Solti and Margaret Hillis, Doreen Rao prepared choruses for recordings that won four Grammy Awards and a Grand Prix du Disque. Doreen Rao made her conducting debut at London's Royal Festival Hall in 1980 and her New York conducting debut with the American Symphony Orchestra in 1985. Dr. Rao has also been a featured guest conductor for numerous university choral workshops, all state choruses and international music festivals.

Dr. Rao is especially recognized for her commitment to performance based music education and the future of choral music in the schools. She founded the ACDA National Committee on Children's Choirs in 1979 and served on the MENC National Committee on Standards in Music Education until 1985. Doreen Rao holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. She is the author of *Choral Music Experience*, a comprehensive series of choral textbooks and music published by Boosey & Hawkes.

**PIERRE HÉTU**, born in Montreal, graduated from the Conservatoire de Montréal and the Music Department of the Université de Montréal. He studied conducting in Paris and spent three consecutive summers at the Chigiana Music Academy in Sienna, Italy. In 1961 he won the first prize of the International Competition for Conductors in Besançon, France, after which he spent one year in Vienna at the Music Academy. He also studied with Charles Munch in Tanglewood, and in Düsseldorf with Jean Martinon.

In 1963 he was appointed Assistant Conductor of the Montreal Symphony. In 1968 he became the Music Director of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, and two years later accepted the post of Associate Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. From 1973 to 1980 he was the Music Director of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Since 1980, Mr. Héту has continued his guest conducting with major Canadian orchestras and opera houses, the CBC radio and television, European and American orchestras. More recently, he has been involved in clinics with various student orchestras across North America and has taught conducting both privately and in master classes. Pierre Héту is now Associate Professor and the resident conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra



# UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

## Student Members

### Soprano

Hehsun Chun  
Alice Hayward  
Lisa Iwasaki \*  
Anita Kwok  
Susan Lexa  
Andrea Ludwig  
Jennifer Maines  
Olga Mychajluk  
Dini Odinski  
Bonnie Rosenberg  
Doreen Taylor  
Esther Tse  
Rebecca Whelan  
Anne Wright

### Altos

Paula Babb+  
Andrea Bellefeuille  
Janet Brennehan\*  
Joan Curry  
Judith DeHaney  
Hilary Knox  
Rhonda Lennie  
Batya Levy\*  
Deborah Maes  
Colleen Morrison  
Yee Man Tsui  
Jennifer Tyrwhitt  
Vilma Vitols  
Marianne Zin

### Tenors

Rob Herriot  
Rick Hiir  
Stephen Holloway

## Basses

Allen Alexander  
Kerim Anwar  
Joe Argentino  
David Baitz  
Rob Baker  
Tony Bergamin  
Victor Ceni  
Martin Cheng  
Deon Flash  
Jonathan Freeman  
Drew Gill  
Mike Hall  
Ho Lee  
Rob Matys  
Matt Pines  
David Pratt  
Colin Roche  
Warren Seale  
Marc Sottile  
David Szanto  
Marc Toth  
Anthony Zarb

## Community Members

### Sopranos

Talin Arzumanian  
Rosemary Beattie  
Francis Bianchi  
Anne Bolger  
Lois Bradley-Bell  
Cathy Cassel  
Joy Chan  
Cheryl Haney  
Anne Kong

Joan MacNeil  
Sophia Panousopoulos  
Connie Price  
Friederike Runge  
Madhu Sethi  
Rebecca Simkin  
Carol Smiley  
Sharon Totafurno  
Mimi Wong

### Altos

Lise Beaupré  
Karen Bender  
Cathy Blewett  
Elisabeth Block  
Bridget Brady  
Lori Dolloff  
Elizabeth Elliott  
Sandra Gazetos  
Ariela Getrajhendler  
Judy Ginou  
Janet Hinton  
Rosalyn Irvine  
Carol Kerr  
Sara Lackie  
Elizabeth Legget  
Marlene Marwah  
Reta McWhinnie  
Barbara Muirhead  
Chrisiane Palmer  
Jennifer Pierson  
Liz Radzick  
Audrey Stacey  
Kathy Treganowan  
Leanne Waters

## Tenors

Ken Beattie  
Joaquin Espinoza  
Thomas Kemple  
Bert Roest  
George Yu

## Basses

Ross Aiken  
Mark Bell  
David Bowser  
Alan Elliot  
Mike Griffin  
Neil Johnston  
Neil Langley  
James McGowan  
Arpád Molnar  
Carlos Noronha  
David Pratt  
Reid Robins  
Henry Rose  
Gerard Stocker

+ Manager  
\* Section leader